

MEMORANDUM

From: Head Legal Assistance, Judge Advocate Division, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps  
To: All Marines

Subj: JAL ADVISORY 7-03: IDENTITY THEFT ALERT—"PHISHING"

1. On July 21, 2003, the FBI and Federal Trade Commission reported the existence of a new form of identity theft known as "phishing".
2. Unsolicited e-mails are sent to consumers bearing seemingly official logos of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) such as America Online, EarthLink, and other ISPs. These e-mails provide hyperlinks to websites that appear to be valid ISP websites, but in fact are "Trojan horse" websites run by the scammer. These false sites ask the user to supply personal information such billing information or other sensitive data.
3. Marines can help protect themselves by: (1) never clicking on links in e-mails that ask for personal information or that claim accounts may be closed unless billing information is confirmed; (2) looking for the "lock" on their Internet browser indicating the presence of Secure Sockets Layer, the industry standard for secure websites; and, (3) directly contacting the company mentioned in the e-mail for confirmation—or denial—of the e-mail's contents. Do not utilize e-mail addresses or phone numbers contained in the questionable e-mail.
3. Marines or their dependents should immediately report such activities to law enforcement in the state where the incident occurred, and should visit their local Legal Assistance Office. Legal Assistance Attorneys are trained in identity theft and consumer protection law and will provide advice on protective measures that can be taken immediately that may limit financial loss. Additionally, servicemembers should, with the assistance of Legal Assistance, file a complaint with the Military Sentinel database at <http://www.consumer.gov/military>. Complaints so logged are reviewed by the FTC and may be investigated by the FTC or by the US and participating foreign law enforcement agencies that utilize the database.
4. Please contact your local Legal Assistance Office with any questions regarding this advisory or for legal advice. CMC (Code JAL) may be reached at [HQMCLegal@HQMC.USMC.MIL](mailto:HQMCLegal@HQMC.USMC.MIL) or at (703) 614-1266.

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